

ing the very objects they are professedly formed to promote.

It almost invariably happens that the persons composing them are selected from no knowledge of the subject, but from wealth or importance in other respects; and it is not unfrequently the case, that various and conflicting interests tend to promote disunion amongst them, and to nullify the effect of consultation. Consequent upon this system is that most pernicious one, putting up churches to competition, both as regards architects and builders; and when it comes to the choice and decision of plans and estimates, it very generally, and not unnaturally, happens that the cheapest is considered the best; the cheapest, that is for the present time, though posterity will have to mourn over the false economy of their ancestors.

It is enough to assert, that it is impossible for any architect to act under such influence, or to do himself or his cause credit, when he is canvassed and advised, cut down and perplexed by the contradictory statements of such a body. He is driven to the alternative of manfully refusing to listen to suggestions and alterations in his plans which he knows to be wrong, and so losing his employment; or of compromising his character as an architect, by perpetrating enormities suggested by the committee for cheapness or conveniences, but of which he has to bear the discredit. A good architect therefore becomes dispirited or disgusted; an indifferent and careless one becomes reckless.

It might be some evidence against a system, that I believe if every architect in England were canvassed on the subject, not one would be found to hold up his hand in favour of these building committees, constituted without reference to architectural or ecclesiastical knowledge, and, in fact, without any further responsibility than their own consciences may suggest. It is a still stronger evidence against it that I have hardly known one man who had any knowledge of the subject, who did not bitterly lament having joined such a committee, and in very many cases has found it necessary to save his own credit by refusing to act upon it; and, moreover, if we may judge of causes by their effects, it is a staggering fact that the best instances of restorations of old churches, and the building of new ones, have been where no committee has acted, but one person has been responsible, though aided of course in his opinions by persons competent to give it.

If I am wrong as to fact, I beg I may be presently corrected. In place, then, of these numberless committees, rent by conflicting interests in themselves, and each one differing in opinion and knowledge of fact from the other, laying out for plans of designs by competition, and sitting in judgment on things by which the most experienced, under the same circumstances, might be easily deceived (for drawings and designs are very different from realities), instead of such a disjointed and cumbrous machinery as this, it would seem the most rational plan to have, when required, one body of men who should decide on the propriety of each particular church within its own district. And what body more proper than the committee of an architectural society, composed, as it is, of professional architects, clergymen, antiquaries, and others, whose business it is to make themselves acquainted with the facts and details of church architecture, and who, having no interest to serve, can have but one single object in view, viz., to rear a temple fit for God's service, the best that can be reared with their present means?

There is no occasion, then, for competition; an accredited architect can be fixed on for the work; and if, by the advice of the committee, any thing is done wrong, there is a responsible body, and every one knows who they are and where they are. The clergymen and churchwardens in each parish are the committee to whom the law has entrusted the care of the church. It is reasonable that they should discharge their responsibility by getting the best advice they can on the subject. But if they are not competent to fix on an architect, and to judge of the correctness of his proposals, they certainly are not competent to decide amongst a number of different plans and conflicting opinions. And as to their calling in indiscriminately, the opinions of persons no better qualified than themselves to give it, it would really seem as reasonable to send, in

sickness, for a physician, and then to summon four or five of the worthiest friends one could find, to sit in judgment on his prescription. If, then, in any parish where a church is to be built or restored, the clergyman would seek the advice of an architectural, instead of a heterogeneous committee, and if any committee be required to act, let them be the responsible body. We should then see what is the use of architectural societies, not by the talk and noise they make in the world, but by the solid and substantial temples which would silently be reared for the service of God.

#### THE NEW CHURCH IN THE CITY ROAD. EFFECTS OF THE WEATHER ON MASONRY.

THE church, now in progress in the City Road stands within a crescent, which is on the north side, about an equal distance between the Angel and the Eagle Tavern. The style may be considered as late early-English, and though plain, is ably treated in all points, particularly in the mouldings. The plan consists of nave and aisles, chancel, a north chapel to the chancel, continuous with the aisle, and a tower in a corresponding position on the south. The north chapel is only to be distinguished externally, by a broader buttress of separation; but the tower projects a little in advance of the north aisle. The lower part of the tower will be grained, and this, and the north chapel open into the aisles, and the chancel, by large arches. A sacristy is placed in the angle between the north chapel and the chancel, the latter projecting some distance eastward. There is a turret staircase to the tower, and also one at the west, probably for an approach to the organ loft. The houses of the crescent approach so near to the walls of the church, that it has been necessary to cut off the angle of the sacristy—the door now being in the splay. The architect has also had to omit buttresses at the angles of the church, and to substitute a splay, the angle being corbelled out above. It is precisely such points as these, which become fortunate opportunities in the hands of an able architect; but they require a more than ordinary insight into the principles of the art. One who had a very moderate knowledge of the style he had chosen, or a partial acquaintance with examples, such as he had been accustomed to copy, relying only on such aids, assuredly would under such circumstances, fall into some glaring error, and such an example as that in question, furnishes a fitting, though slight illustration, of what we have often endeavoured to inculcate, in urging the importance of a perfect knowledge of examples, combined with the desire to learn their principles, and to use them as the materials, out of which to originate really new productions. The great sameness of character in many of the designs for cheap churches, already commented on, is a proof of the imperfect state, in which our knowledge of Gothic architecture still remains.—The piers of the nave are varied in plan, and will have alternately, moulded and foliated capitals. The entrances are one at the west, and a south door projecting with a gable head, so as to afford room for deeply recessed mouldings and shafts. The east end is lighted by five lancets. The windows of the aisles are of two lights, the space above the mullion being pierced with a quatrefoil. They are splayed out to a great width in the interior, after the manner of old examples. The materials used are Bath stone for the mouldings, and Kentish rag for the walls. The latter material has been disposed in irregular courses, this church being one of the few new ones, in which the material has been employed in the manner, recommended in a recent article published elsewhere. An opinion as to the comparative effect of this method, and that where stones in the courses, are used all of equal height, can hardly be formed till the work is pointed, and complete. Mr. Scott is the architect.

The severe frost, about ten days ago, did great injury to this building, as to many others in London. Every arch in the arcade which is erected, has suffered, the voussours being split, so that it will be necessary to replace them with new stones. The wall had been in a very damp state, not only from having been recently erected, but from the previous rain, which seems to have run down, and gained entrance at the top of the label. Two adjoin-

ing voussours have failed, in most cases, through the expansion of one, against the other. Too great care cannot be taken in protecting walls from the weather at this season, for although ordinary precautions be employed, serious injury may be done, as in this case, in a single night. It may be remarked, that the north side of the arches, that next the quarter from which the wind blew, is the only one in which the fissures are apparent.

#### ON STAINED GLASS WINDOWS.

At the Decorative Art Society on the 13th inst., Mr. C. Cooper read the first portion of a paper "On Stained-glass Windows," chronologically considered, noticing such as were executed before the 16th century. He introduced the subject by stating, that his observations would have reference to stained-glass as a pictorial and decorative adjunct, classifying the principal features which characterized the works of several periods in ecclesiastical and public buildings. A brief description was given of the various properties of glass in use, such as *painted glass*, *pot metal*, and *flashed glass*, and it was said that England during the middle ages was not celebrated for manufacturing the more costly and beautiful tints, it being usually stipulated in the contracts of those times, that for the more precious colours none should be used "but glass from beyond seas." Painting upon white-glass was pointed out as producing muddy opaque effects of a perishable nature,—*pot-metals*, as being essentially brilliant and durable, and *flashed glass*, as allowing the partial removal of the coloured surface by grinding, as practised in the examples during the 15th and 16th centuries, or by the more economic action of the fluoric acid. The greater brilliancy and depth of colour produced by the two latter kinds beyond that in which the colours are painted on the glass, and subsequently burned in, was demonstrated, and it was said that a prejudice in the public mind as regards the decline of the art, might be attributed to the practice in later times, of using painted glass when attempting pictorial display.

The reader said, that the earliest notice of glass being employed for windows occurs in Bede's account of sending to France to procure glass manufacturers, and to bring them over to glaze the windows of the monastery at Weremouth in the 7th century, and which mission was successful. The artisans then brought over gave instructions to the English in the art of making glass for window-lumps and other works. Although the account given was not clear, as to the nature of the glass, made, he would infer that it was *coloured glass* from Walpole's having ascribed the introduction of painting into this island to Bede. The examples of the 9th century were said to exhibit barbarous attempts in delineating the human figure;—the Norman and Semi-Norman windows, as having considerable merit;—the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries present progressive improvements in the art, with admirable fitness of design; but the 16th century, in the reader's opinion, witnessed the decline of the art, at least in the suitability of the design to the material; which he explained to arise from attempts to produce perspective effects in which the drawing and foreshortening are accurately represented, but the figures and objects at various distances are of an uniform depth of colour. From the unsuitableness of the material, aerial perspective was never attained.

Mr. Cooper next entered upon an analysis of the designs and colours peculiar in the several centuries. Previously to the 11th century, representations of the human form were attempted in a rude manner, without any shading or pencilling; the colours being *pot-metal*, and the outline formed by the leading. The flesh and features were sometimes left in clear white glass. The subjects usually consisted of three or more figures—saints, kings, attendant angels, &c.—on a deep blue ground, and the colours were nearly always restricted to the primaries. With reference to the 12th and 13th centuries it was stated, that the general design is composed of geometrical forms in panels, either squares or circles, or portions of them. The vesica piscis being frequently met with (formed from the intersection of two equal circles at their centres), and also the